



Eddie A. Perez, Mayor

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MAYOR PEREZ'S EDUCATIONAL MESSAGE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR HISPANICS GETS NATIONAL ATTENTION

(January 23, 2006)--- **Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez believes that education is the great equalizer in our society.** His message of hope and opportunity is the subject of a featured article in **"Hispanic Outlook,"** a national magazine that focuses on increasing opportunities for Hispanics from coast to coast.

Mayor Perez discusses how education has made a great difference in his life as a Latino and how his Private School Initiative will help open doors for the next generation of Hispanic leaders.

Mayor Perez says, "Let's look at the numbers. Ninety-nine percent of the students who attend independent schools get into college. But Hispanic families in Hartford—like many families in this country—often feel that college is financially out of reach. Here is a statistic that speaks directly to that: Private school students are likely to get better financial aid packages and scholarships. And there's more. Fifty percent of Hispanics and Blacks who enter college don't graduate. Students who attend independent schools are four times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree or higher."

Mayor Perez wants to increase the number of Hartford students who graduate from college by 25-percent. That is why the Mayor is working to strengthen the public school curriculum, keep Magnet Schools competitive, and now add the option of attending an independent school.

Connecticut is rich with some of the best private schools in the world. 19 schools are now part of the Mayor's Independent School Initiative. The Hartford Youth Scholars Foundation has been created and will serve as the vehicle to leverage and raise new funds.